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Oceans and the law of the sea

Letter dated 20 December 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

By virtue of General Assembly resolution 65/37 B of 4 April 2011, a workshop was held in Belgium from 27 to 29 June 2012 under the auspices of the United Nations in support of the first phase of the first assessment cycle of the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects.

I have the honour to transmit herewith the report of that workshop (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as documents of the General Assembly under agenda item 75 (a).

(*Signed*) Jan **Grauls**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations

12-66752 (E) 140113 170113

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Annex to the letter dated 20 December 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English]

Final report of the workshop held under the auspices of the United Nations in support of the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects

Brussels, 27 to 29 June 2012

I. Background

1. Following the recommendations made at the second meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects, and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 66/231, a workshop for the North Atlantic, the Baltic Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea was held from 27 to 29 June 2012 at the Egmont Palace in Brussels, under the auspices of the United Nations, in support of the Regular Process.

2. The workshop was conducted in close cooperation among the host country, the European Union and the secretariat of the Regular Process, the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Secretariat. It was organized with the cooperation and support of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). It proceeded in accordance with the agenda (see annex 1).[a] A list of participants is contained in annex 2 and a literature list is included in annex 8.

II. Proceedings of the workshop

Agenda items 1 to 5: opening of the workshop, organization of the workshop and adoption of the agenda

3. The workshop was opened by Mr. Marijn Rabaut, North Sea Adviser for the Belgian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Economy, Consumer Affairs and the North Sea, Belgium. The speaker mentioned the importance of the Regular Process and protection and sustainable use of coastal and marine resources, and wished the participants a successful workshop.

4. The host country nominated Ms. Lorna Inniss, Joint Coordinator of the Group of Experts of the Regular Process, and Ms. Sophie Mirgaux, representative of the Belgian Federal Public Service of Health, Food Chain Safety and the Environment as Co-Chairs of the workshop. A team of rapporteurs was appointed, consisting of Ms. Trine Christiansen (European Environment Agency), Mr. Wouter

[a] The presentations made at the workshop and annexes mentioned in the present report are available from http://regularprocess.iode.org.

Rommens (Consultant, United Nations Environment Programme/GRID-Arendal), and Ms. Saskia Van Gaever (Group of Experts).

5. The objectives of the regional workshops were explained by the Co-Chairs. As recommended by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole of the General Assembly on the Regular Process in February 2011, the regional workshops are devised as a key mechanism by which the first global integrated marine assessment will be accomplished and States will enhance their assessment capacity. Workshops are also intended to facilitate dialogue between the Group of Experts of the Regular Process and representatives and experts from States and relevant intergovernmental organizations. The first workshop was held in Santiago in September 2011. The second workshop was held in Sanya, China, in February 2012.

6. Pursuant to the guidelines for workshops, participants in the workshop were asked to provide beforehand contributions on the information listed in its appendix I. An analysis of the existing marine assessments in Europe was conducted by Mr. Frédéric Brochier, UNESCO/IOC Consultant, and was considered a very important information and basis document (annex 3).

7. The workshop was held in the format of presentations by invited experts, followed by discussions in the plenary setting on the presentations, as well as work in working groups, reporting back to the plenary.

8. The workshop adopted its agenda as set out in annex 1.

Agenda item 6.1: background of the Regular Process

9. The background of the Regular Process was introduced to participants at the workshop.

The Regular Process and the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole of the General Assembly (Ms. Annebeth Rosenboom, Senior Legal Officer, Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea)

10. The rationale, history, mandate, institutional arrangements and next steps of the Regular Process were explained. In 2002, States at the World Summit on Sustainable Development recommended the creation of a regular process for these purposes. The preparatory phase of the Regular Process was from 2002 to 2005, followed by the start-up phase from 2005 to 2009. In 2009 and 2010, the framework, first cycle and modalities of the Regular Process were developed. From 2010 to 2012, the first phase of the first cycle began, under the oversight and guidance of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole, to develop the strategy for the first global integrated marine assessment, which will be produced during the second phase of the first cycle, from 2013 to 2014.

11. The institutional arrangements, in addition to the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole, include the following:

(a) Bureau of the Regular Process: three Member States from each regional group of the General Assembly, with one Member State from each regional group and one Co-Chair needed for a quorum;

(b) Group of Experts of the Regular Process: up to five experts nominated by each regional group. The Group of Experts has designated two of its members to act as joint coordinators;

(c) Pool of experts: much larger body of experts, which will consist of more than 1,000 individual experts nominated, according to the agreed criteria, by Member States through each regional group.

12. It was important to understand the pressures and difficulties in this work and the need for capacity-building and transfer of technology. Financial constraints were being faced by States to support the process, and some alterations had already been made to the working modality according to available resources.

Agenda items 6.2 to 6.6: Framework of the first cycle of the Regular Process

13. A series of presentations was given on various aspects of the Regular Process, including capacity-building for marine assessments.

Taking forward the world ocean assessment I (Mr. Alan Simcock, Group of Experts)

14. Mr. Simcock emphasized the aims, scope and desired outcome of the workshop. The main points in the subsequent discussion were:

(a) This first world ocean assessment will provide an overall map of human activities, pressures and environmental problems that can be used by specialized agencies to set their direction and achieve their goals;

(b) Two important issues will be scale and integration. The Regular Process should build on management-based integrated assessments. It will be necessary to describe the different ecosystem components and to scale these up to the global level;

(c) It is clear that capacity-building for assessments is considered a crucial part of the process by the developing countries;

(d) There is a general concern that the outline of the first assessment is not that "ecosystem-friendly";

(e) How will the extensive first assessment be presented to and used by the high-level policymakers, by directors of banks, by the private sector, etc.?

Global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment (world ocean assessment): outline of the first integrated assessment report (Mr. Peter Harris, Group of Experts)

15. Mr. Harris presented the outline of the first report. This version had undergone thorough discussion and had finally been approved by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole in April 2012. The underlying approach was to be the Driving Forces — Pressures — State — Impact — Responses (DPSIR). The outline is divided into seven parts: (a) summary for decision makers; (b) context of the assessment; (c) ocean ecosystem services; (d) cross-cutting issue — food security and safety; (e) other human activities; (f) biodiversity and habitats; (g) overall evaluations.

16. It was clearly explained that the first report will make no evaluation of existing assessments. However, if the aim is to produce a fully integrated assessment, the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole has accepted that the environment, the economy and/or society have been significantly affected by regulatory measures. The first world ocean assessment will therefore identify environmental, economic and/or

social consequences of policy interventions, without expressing a view on the policies themselves.

Method of work and guidance for authors (Mr. Chul Park, Group of Experts)

17. The presentation provided information on the assessment team; the types of input from members of the Group of Experts and the pool of experts; the selection of drafters; the sequence of inputs by drafters, consultants, peer reviewers and the Group of Experts; and guidance for contributors.

18. The guidance for contributors will be finalized as soon as possible and will help all involved parties to move in the same direction and to provide a transparent process. It will cover the kinds of information that should be used in the assessment; the preference for publicly available, peer-reviewed information; the safeguards for information that has not been peer-reviewed; how to deal with divergent views, uncertainty and risk; and the need to ensure proper citation of sources used and to disclose any conflict of interest. The guidance will also cover approaches to integration and a style sheet. All authors would act in their personal capacity as independent experts and not as representatives of a Government or any other authority or organization.

19. In the subsequent discussion, the following suggestions were made:

(a) To explain in detail the use of the DPSIR framework in the first assessment;

(b) To add some consideration on the role of an integrated assessment in chapter 2;

(c) To add some case examples of implications of cumulative pressures in chapter 46;

(d) To increase the connectivity among chapters, for instance, through the ecosystem services chapters;

(e) To describe tourism as a sector exploiting ecosystem services;

(f) To use as much as possible quantified data in order to maximize confidence levels.

20. The following general concerns were explained:

(a) There is an urgent need for experts from Eastern Europe. It should be possible to contact them via the Coastal and Marine Union (EUCC) network;

(b) The Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole decided that the control and guidance of the Regular Process will be in the hands of the States. Ministries of Foreign Affairs can nominate national experts, experts from international organizations and experts from other States to be members of the pool of experts. Nominations should be sent to the Permanent Missions in New York. Personal history forms are available from http://www.un.org/Depts/los/global_reporting/Personal_History_Form.doc. The list of appointed experts can be found at http://www.un.org/Depts/los/global_reporting/Pool%20of%20experts%20Chart.pdf;

(c) Members of the Group of Experts in charge of leading the drafting of chapters will informally contact specialized agencies or organizations to supply them with data or advice;

(d) The question was raised as to whether results will be presented per region or as one worldwide assessment. The approach will be mixed throughout the assessment report and will depend on the topic of the chapter. For instance, land-based inputs cannot be evaluated without a regional description. Other subjects, for example, whales or sea turtles, will be handled only on a global level;

(e) This first assessment will be based only on existing, available assessments. The Group of Experts has neither the mandate nor the resources to go back to original data. This first assessment is labelled as a benchmark or baseline against which the results of future assessments will be measured. The report will address how marine assessments can be improved in the various regions. An important goal will be to give clearer guidance on how major intergovernmental organizations can change their practice to improve marine ecosystem management.

Agenda item 8: overview of existing regional assessments and presentation of regional programmes

Information and assessments from the United States of America (Mr. Jake Rice and Mr. Andrew Rosenberg, Group of Experts)

21. Mr. Rosenberg presented on existing marine assessments from the United States side of the North-West Atlantic. He first explained that the United States National Coastal Condition Report looks primarily at water quality all around the country, but also at sediment quality, the benthic index and the fish tissue contaminant index. This report contains quantitative data. The United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration publishes extensive information on fishing, including stock status, fishing gear and stock evolution. Results of research vessel surveys (Northeast Fisheries Science Center monitoring stations) analyse fish stocks and hydrographic information which is compiled in annual reports. Regional assessments (North-East region assessment) deal with environmental and ecosystem surveys; protected species assessments exist as well. Additionally, socioeconomic assessments were carried out on issues such as the economic importance of certain types of fisheries, evaluation of the social capital of fisheries, assessment of job satisfaction and environmental impact assessments. A national ocean economics programme (including a database) was also developed.

22. Mr. Rice presented on assessments in the Canadian North-West Atlantic Ocean. Canada conducts a number of different types of assessments, such as water quality monitoring (focused in main harbours), mandatory compliance monitoring (for specific industries only), physical oceanographic monitoring, biotic monitoring, satellite monitoring stations, fish and invertebrate assessments and Aichi Biodiversity Target reporting. Most regions have annual state of the ocean reports. Socioeconomic information is compiled in marine economy statistics, fisheries databases and marine transportation databases. Integration of the results is partially taken care of in ecosystem overview and assessment reports, ecosystem status and trends reports and the health of the ocean reports. Federal programmes are conducted by Fisheries and Oceans Canada or Environment Canada, and methods are standardized.

Overview of existing marine assessments in Europe (North-East Atlantic, Baltic Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea) (Mr. Frédéric Brochier, Consultant, UNESCO/IOC)

23. Mr. Brochier presented the very broad and detailed report on the existing marine assessments in Europe that he had prepared for UNESCO/IOC (annex 3). The report makes an inventory of recent assessments (including in-depth coverage of the Mediterranean and Black Seas) and proposes new assessments where gaps were distinguished.

24. The report envisages the inventory and suggests new and recent marine assessments that may be relevant for the regional Regular Process for Europe. This inventory uses the GRAMED database and may, at the same time, contribute to the update of the database. GRAMED has turned out to be a meaningful informative tool to support marine assessment-related activities. Most assessments are regional, and national assessments are harder to access (including because of language issues). The report also provides insight into the evolution over the past five years and includes a first attempt to provide a gap analysis across the four regional European seas (most information being on the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, with the Black Sea lagging behind). Regional assessments are made available by the OSPAR Commission, the Black Sea Commission, the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) and UNEP/MAP Plan Bleu. Regional seas conventions have regular assessments. The Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) of the European Union will be an important contribution. Global, supra-regional assessments carried out include reports from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), the Marine Board of the European Science Foundation, the European Environment Agency (EEA) and UNEP. However, considering the considerable differences between regions in terms of the quality, quantity and availability of information, socioeconomic setting and environmental conditions, the achievement of comparability is particularly challenging.

25. In the light of the information provided, the following commonalities between assessments and broad weaknesses in the past five years can nevertheless be identified:

(a) No assessment can be considered fully exhaustive since assessments typically capture a particular understanding of complex issues at a certain time. The capacity to produce and update thematic (narrow) assessment reports on a regular basis is therefore of key importance. The regional seas conventions (OSPAR, Helsinki, Barcelona and Bucharest Conventions) gave rise to regional action plans that set forth specific goals and targets for regional seas and produce regular assessment mechanisms;

(b) Assessment capacity is generally strong throughout Europe and many high-quality updated assessments have been produced recently. Integrated (broad) assessments are available for the four regional seas, reflecting progress in addressing more deeply the effects of multiple stressors combining global and regional scales;

(c) Most of the assessments surveyed had stated objectives, while a clear conceptual framework of the assessment approach was often not specified;

(d) Assessments generally clearly identify main drivers of human development and associated pressures that, along with natural processes, affect the state and trends of the marine environment. However, fewer still fully incorporate multiple pressures from the anthropogenic use of the marine resources and related cross-effects. Thematic assessments (pressure-based) are prevailing and quantitative impact assessments of multiple human threats and related impacts on marine habitats have rarely been conducted at the regional level. Regional assessments of human-driven impacts may consider that threats on habitats do not act in isolation;

(e) An ecosystem approach to the management of the marine environment has received considerable attention in recent years. However, the integration level of socioeconomic issues still appears to be weak despite some recent progress;

(f) Assessment of the impacts of human activities is still based too heavily on qualitative information. In particular, gaps in the knowledge relating to biodiversity and habitats appear to be a major constraint;

(g) A major challenge facing the regional assessment practice is the lack of information on both cumulative and synergistic effects. For instance, climate variations and ecosystem perturbations are both key threatening processes driving the regional loss in biodiversity. Yet, too little is known about synergistic effects on biological populations owing to the complexity of underlying processes;

(h) The report states that, in order to move forward, more regional comparability is needed to reduce the lack of comparable data, add cumulative effects and clarify the definition of assessment in a regional context.

26. Representatives from HELCOM were interested in knowing how to add assessments to GRAMED. Partners in the PEGASO project added that an assessment on the Mediterranean and Black Seas will be prepared by March 2013, mainly to support the ICES protocol for the Mediterranean.

Assessments of the marine and coastal environment in the Mediterranean (Mr. Michael Angelidis, UNEP/MAP)

27. Mr. Angelidis gave an overview of the history and goals of the Mediterranean Action Plan and of the Barcelona Convention and the Protocols thereto. Both have an important assessment component and build their work on the ecosystem approach. Initially the target was mainly pollution, but more recently, assessments have been made on biodiversity and marine protected areas, maritime traffic and accidents, sustainable development, integrated coastal zone management and cleaner production and consumption.

28. The initial assessment of the ecosystem approach (ECAP) is participatory, peer-reviewed and scheduled for 2012. It will identify priorities, determine available information and identify gaps in research and monitoring, including economic value. At their 17th Conference, in 2012, the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention decided on a socioeconomic analysis, which has as an overall objective of elaborating a common understanding and fostering a broad appropriation by Mediterranean riparian countries of the social and economic dimensions involved in the ECAP implementation. Monitoring is conducted on the state of the marine environment and trends, nutrients, eutrophication, hazardous substances in sediment and biota.

29. Additional recently published assessments in the Mediterranean region concern food security and food safety, human activities (including shipping and tourism) affecting the marine environment, maritime traffic, accidents, sustainable development, integrated coastal zone management, cleaner production and consumption. The goal is to build synergies between ECAP and both MSFD and the Regular Process.

Socioeconomic dimension (for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment) (Mr. Paulo Augusto Nunes, International Commission for the Scientific Exploration of the Mediterranean Sea (ICSEM))

30. Mr. Nunes gave a presentation on natural capital accounting. The socioeconomic dimension of marine biodiversity consists of three pillars: recognizing value (a feature of all human societies and communities); demonstrating value (in economic/monetary terms to support decision-making); and capturing value (introduce mechanisms that incorporate the values of ecosystems into decision-making). The presentation showed that oceans and European regional seas are responsible for the provision of a wide range of goods and services and are therefore a source of socioeconomic value, whether or not they enter the marketplace. Mr. Nunes stated that conventional measures of national economic performance (for example, growth in gross domestic product (GDP)) fail to reflect these natural capital assets and their benefits flows.

31. All countries rely on a system of national accounts, but some information is missing or invisible: depletion and degradation of marine natural capital, offshore oil and gas and minerals, seagrass coverage, fish stocks, marine genetic materials, the water column, environmental degradation, coastal pollution, loss of coastal tourism productivity, ecosystem services, carbon storage (blue carbon), coastal flood mitigation, marine cultural heritage and seascapes. Better indicators for monitoring sustainable development and long-term growth are needed, as well as better management of natural capital for growth and poverty reduction (especially in the context of the socioeconomic diversity of the Mediterranean Sea). Questions that need to be answered include, inter alia, how to weigh trade-offs among competing users, for example the transport industry, the offshore oil and gas industry, fishermen and coastal tourism; how much should be invested in natural capital, such as marine protected areas; how to make ecotourism work for the poor; and how to balance marine spatial planning, including tourism, fisheries and other ecosystem services like carbon storage or water quality.

32. The United Nations System of Environmental-Economic Accounts (SEEA), developed over the past 20 years, is a comprehensive accounting framework that links the use of natural capital by the economy and the impact of the economy on natural capital. It establishes agreed methodology for material natural resources, but more work is needed for the "more difficult to measure" natural capital, namely ecosystems.

33. In partnership with the World Bank, ICSEM is working to implement natural capital accounting in countries along the North and South shores; incorporate natural capital accounts in policy analysis and marine spatial development planning; increase scientific credibility by developing a methodology for ecosystem accounting for SEEA with natural scientists; and promote the global adoption of natural capital accounting beyond the pilot countries. Experience in the field of ocean ecosystems is nevertheless lacking.

34. Participants agreed that there is a clear interest in this type of approach as a way to go beyond the traditional framework and discussed the links with the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB), Eurostat and MSFD. It was also noted that this methodology may be implemented in small island developing States.

Activities of HELCOM in assessing the Baltic Sea (Ms. Maria Laamanen, HELCOM)

35. Ms. Laamanen gave a brief overview of the Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention and their tasks. HELCOM is the governing body for this Convention. According to HELCOM, the Baltic Sea has both natural and monetary value. In 2007, the HELCOM Baltic Sea action plan was adopted at the ministerial level. It uses the ecosystem-based approach to the management of human activities; sets ecological goals and objectives; adopts measures and actions for eutrophication, hazardous substances, maritime activities, biodiversity and nature conservation, and national implementation programmes; and has a specific section addressing the development of thematic integrated assessment tools and methodologies. From 2003 to 2007, HELCOM performed the HELCOM initial holistic assessment of the ecosystem health of the Baltic Sea, which gives an overview of the various assessments and indicator factsheets relating to the status of the Baltic Sea, its ecosystem health, anthropogenic pressures (via the Baltic Sea pressure index) and protected areas (10 per cent is protected, but ecological coherence has not yet been reached), and provides an economic analysis. It serves as a baseline for assessing the effectiveness of the implementation of the measures of the HELCOM Baltic Sea action plan in order to determine how far we are from reaching good environmental status.

Quality status report 2010 (Mr. Stephen Malcolm, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas), United Kingdom)

36. Mr. Malcolm gave an overview of OSPAR's objectives, principles, geographic maritime area and contracting parties. He gave a detailed explanation about the OSPAR Commission's quality status report (launched at the Ministerial Meeting held in 2010 in Bergen, Norway), which includes an analysis of the hydrodynamics, chemistry, habitats and biota; the impact of humans over space and time against this background of natural variability; and the cumulative and relative impact of all the human pressures on the marine environment. It also includes an evaluation of the effectiveness of the measures taken, identifies gaps and priorities for action and serves as a basis for further implementation of the ecosystem approach. It aims to cover, as far as possible, the initial assessment requirements of the European Union MSFD. After detailing the key findings of the report, Mr. Malcolm explained the various phases that had been undertaken in order to arrive at the report (preparation and groundwork, development, compilation and drafting, stakeholder consultation, scientific peer review, publication, launch of the report) and the goals it reached (recommendations for policy revision, pressures dropped, fisheries managed more sustainably, species protected, etc.).

What is ICES and what can ICES provide to the Regular Process? (Mr. Jörn Schmidt, ICES)

37. Mr. Schmidt gave an overview of what ICES is and what it can provide to the Regular Process. He illustrated that ICES is a relevant, responsive, sound and credible international scientific community concerning marine ecosystems and their relation to humanity. ICES aims to ensure that the best available science is accessible to decision makers in order for them to make informed choices on the sustainable use of the marine environment and ecosystems, including on oceanography, contaminants, phytoplankton, zooplankton, fish, mammals and seabirds, integrated physical-biological modelling, economic-ecological modelling, maritime systems analysis, marine spatial planning, stock assessment methods, biodiversity science and advice, climate change and MSFD. ICES has memorandums of understanding with the European Union, the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC), the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO), the OSPAR Commission and HELCOM and collaborates, inter alia, with the North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES), ICSEM, UNESCO/IOC, the Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research (SCOR), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. ICES covers 200 fish stocks and has studied over 100 years of catch statistics, published status reports on several issues and conducted integrated ecosystem assessments in the Baltic Sea, the North Sea, the western waters and the North-West Atlantic. Additionally, ICES has a specific working group on data and information management and provides training programmes.

38. Participants concluded that ICES compiles, archives and makes available to the public a vast amount of information.

Agenda item 9: presentation of the European Union Marine Strategy Framework Directive

Marine Strategy Framework Directive: initial assessment and its links to the Regular Process (Mr. David Connor, European Commission, Directorate-General for the Environment)

39. Mr. Connor presented on the MSFD initial assessment and its link with the Regular Process. The overall objective of MSFD is to achieve or maintain good environmental status (GES) of all European Union marine waters by 2020 and the adoption of an ecosystem-based and integrated approach to the management of all human activities that have an impact on the marine environment.

40. In order to determine what GES is, a number of descriptors are defined, such as biological diversity, absence of the presence of non-indigenous species, commercial fish and shellfish, food webs, eutrophication, seafloor integrity, hydrography, contaminants, and contaminants in seafood, litter and energy, including underwater noise. The initial assessment will describe the characteristics and status of the marine waters; provide a pressures and impacts analysis, an economic and social analysis, an ecosystem characteristics analysis and a uses and activities analysis; and study the cost of degradation. The main steps of MSFD are the initial assessment of the current environmental status of European Union marine waters, the determination of GES, the establishment of environmental targets and associated indicators, a monitoring programme for ongoing assessment and regular

updating of targets, a programme of measures to achieve or maintain GES and a review of the various steps.

41. Mr. Connor stated that there are some key areas of convergence between MSFD and the Regular Process: the ecosystem approach is central in MSFD and in part III of the Regular Process outline; descriptors 3, 4 and 8 under MSFD are relevant to part IV (food security and food safety) of the Regular Process outline; assessments of impacts of activities under MSFD could feed into part V of the Regular Process outline; broad and predominant habitat types are assessed under MSFD (annex 3, table 1) and the Regular Process in a similar way; throughout MSFD, attention is given to economic and social factors, as in the Regular Process, and reflections on the costs of environmental degradation can help contribute to chapter 47. Nevertheless, there are also gaps and differences in approach with regard to the geographical coverage and the subdivision of the content (Regular Process — sector by sector ("individual" pressures and impacts) versus MSFD — pressure by pressure (cumulative pressure across activities)).

42. Participants agreed that the MSFD initial assessment will be an extremely useful and helpful input to the Regular Process. The challenge will be to synthesize the amount of information in a comprehensive and correct, yet digestible, manner.

Agenda item 10: overview of the existing assessments in the region

43. Mr. Alan Simcock, Group of Experts, gave an overview of the information and assessments in the region (North Atlantic, the Baltic Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea) presented on the first day of the workshop and his first analysis based on the following:

(a) It is clear that there is a great wealth of information. Significant effort has already gone into assessing the state of the oceans and seas in the area. This means that the extra expenditure of the Regular Process will be relatively modest. He stressed the importance of ICES in relation to fisheries and listed GRAMED as an important starting point;

(b) With regard to the assessments done in the United States, Mr. Simcock was struck by the thoroughness of the economic material of the traditional kind. He stressed the need to understand the metadata;

(c) With regard to Canada, he highlighted the diverse set of problems the country has to address and the need to develop the existing information;

(d) The IOC report is extremely comprehensive, covers enormous amounts of information and will be of great use to the Regular Process;

(e) Major progress has been made in the Mediterranean, mainly on the northern, but also on the southern shore. Capacity-building will be of great importance to this area;

(f) The ICSEM presentation covered completely new territory and the question as to what extent the ideas on environmental accounting could be integrated into the Regular Process. The first round of the Regular Process might be too soon;

(g) HELCOM has taken forward a whole range of interesting issues and assessments, which have to be looked at carefully;

(h) OSPAR shows how a wider range of issues can be covered and how this can be underpinned by detailed work;

(i) ICES has an amazing depth of data for three of the five regions, which shows that the Regular Process will have to think carefully about data management. ICES also has a role to play with regard to capacity-building;

(j) Within the European Union, MSFD has been developing alongside the Regular Process. The convergence will definitely be beneficial.

44. Mr. Simcock discerned six action points: (a) there is a need to update GRAMED with the Regular Process information; (b) there is a need to check the various assessments against the outline; (c) it is necessary to determine which assessments are relevant for which chapter; (d) it will be necessary to decide how to achieve integration; (e) the Regular Process needs to reflect on data management and data access (need for transparency and guidance to users); (f) capacity-building remains important.

Agenda items 11 to 18: working groups

45. The summaries from the three working groups are as follows:

A. Working Group 1: State of the Environment (Physical/Chemical/Biological Science) *(Coordinator: Mr. Peter Harris, Rapporteur: Ms. Saskia Van Gaever)*

A1. In addition to the list of assessments compiled by Frédéric Brochier, several others were mentioned and emphasized in a summary table, which is provided in annex 4.

A2. Some overarching conclusions were made at the beginning of the presentation of the working group's results:

(a) The general reports presented by the regional programmes on the first workshop day, namely national reports for MSFD, the Water Framework Directive, the Habitat and Bird Directive, the OSPAR quality status report 2010 and the ICES cooperative reports, will be of very important value for several chapters of the global oceans assessment;

(b) There is a need to include a definition of the concept "ecosystem services" in the world ocean assessment;

(c) It would be very useful to include an extended glossary explaining the concepts and technical terms;

(d) It will be important to have a cross-check and as much compatibility as possible between the "ocean" chapter in the next Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report and the world ocean assessment, and vice versa for the "climate" information;

(e) Some important topics are missing in the current outline but should be addressed: (i) description of the status of alien (invasive) species (alien species are currently included only in chapter 17B relating to shipping, but there are also other sources of the introduction of alien species); (ii) description of the status of pollution and hazardous substances; (iii) description of the status of debris and marine litter;

(f) An additional list of assessments in the Baltic Sea is provided in annex 9.

B. Working Group 2: Pressures and Impacts, including Human Activities

(Coordinator: Mr. Jake Rice, Rapporteur: Ms. Trine Christiansen)

B1. The results of this working group are presented in annex 5. An additional list of assessments in the Baltic Sea is provided in annex 9.

C. Working Group 3: Socioeconomic Aspects *(Coordinator: Mr. Alan Simcock, Rapporteur: Mr. Wouter Rommens)*

C1. The results of this working group are presented in annex 6. Annex 7 presents additional European Union-based information provided by the European Environment Agency.

Agenda item 19: identification of knowledge gaps

46. The identification of knowledge gaps was discussed during the presentation of the working group's results.

Assessing the health of the world's oceans: an ocean health index to assess global marine social-ecological systems (additional presentation by Mr. Andrew Rosenberg, Group of Experts)

47. Until now, there has been no consensus on what determines ocean health and no common metric to measure it. The ocean health index focuses on goals articulated in four decades of ocean treaties and high-level national and intergovernmental reports. Using indicators that measure the intensity of the most urgent ocean stressors, including climate change, ocean acidification, overfishing, habitat degradation, invasive species, loss of biodiversity, pollution and eutrophication, the ocean health index will measure the status and trends of ocean health and its components. The index will also assess trends in remedial actions taken to conserve marine habitats. Finally, the index will relate trends in ocean health to benefits provided to people and human well-being.

Agenda item 21: plan for short-term and mid-term capacity-building for the region and global perspective

Sustainable seas: marine assessment capacity-building in a global perspective (Mr. Wouter Rommens, UNEP/GRID-Arendal)

48. This presentation provided insight into marine assessment capacity-building from a global perspective. Mr. Rommens presented GRID-Arendal, a non-profit, administratively independent institution founded in 1989 by the Norwegian Ministry of Environment to support UNEP and other United Nations agencies. The mission of GRID-Arendal is to create environmental knowledge enabling positive change by organizing and transforming available environmental data into credible, science-based information products delivered through innovative communication tools and capacity-building services targeting relevant stakeholders. Through the UNEP Shelf Programme, GRID-Arendal assisted more than 70 developing States in making their claim for the determination of their extended continental shelves to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf. Through a public-private partnership, GRID-Arendal managed to become the most comprehensive global geospatial and metadata inventory of marine geophysical and geological data. It also provides training. Its sustainable seas programme trains in ecosystem-based management of

the exclusive economic zone and has projects with North-South as well as South-South expertise exchange. GRID-Arendal sees marine assessments as an important tool to provide relevant, credible and useful information to policymakers and decision makers and to the public, raise awareness on environmental issues, support evidence-based environmental management decisions and identify gaps. A state of the marine environment web platform was also created and is in a pilot phase.

49. Mr. Rommens clarified that the sustainable seas programme has a direct and an indirect link with the Regular Process. At the Regular Process workshop held in Sanya, China, a statement on capacity-building was adopted and a decision was taken to hold a capacity-building workshop in Bangkok from 17 to 19 September 2012 to strengthen and promote regional cooperation towards the Regular Process; to assist, as an initial attempt, in capacity-building of the member countries of the North-West Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP), the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) and the Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific (WESTPAC) to conduct the integrated marine assessments; and to contribute to the Regular Process through the provision of an initial "regional trial assessment" and of a new regional methodology for multidisciplinary marine assessments. Indirectly, GRID-Arendal contributes to the Regular Process by building capacity on assessments of the impacts of the offshore oil industry under the Abidjan Convention. GRID-Arendal has templates for the development of marine assessments (pressures, data handling, output, outreach and communication, and policy relevance.

50. Participants were very interested in the various capacity-building projects and schemes.

Agenda items 22 and 23: presentation on data standardization

Data standardization and data access (Mr. Peter Pissierssens, UNESCO/IOC-International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange (IODE))

51. After an introduction on IODE, Mr. Pissierssens showed participants, through concrete examples, what the use and necessity of standards is. He linked the importance of standards with quality and quality control and quality management frameworks. IODE has published over 60 manuals on quality control and standardization. Mr. Pissierssens illustrated the importance of standardization and quality management for the Regular Process and warned that this work will still have to be done since, for existing assessments, metadata are not always available and data provenance and quality are not always known. Mr. Pissierssens also explained about the IODE ocean data portal, which facilitates and promotes the exchange and dissemination of marine data and services and provides the full range of processes, including data discovery, access and visualization. The presentation raised questions with regard to the accessibility of metadata (how to enforce policies) and intellectual property rights.

52. The participants agreed that data standardization, accessibility and storage will be of the utmost importance for the quality of the Regular Process.

Agenda item 25: conclusion and recommendations

Summary of proceedings

53. Mr. Alan Simcock presented a short overview of the output of the workshop. He highlighted the following points:

(a) The workshop had two aims: to bring out what data is available for the assessment of the North Atlantic, the North Sea, the Baltic Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea from the environmental, economic and social points of view; and to start a dialogue between those charged with carrying out the first global integrated marine assessment and the regional experts;

(b) Both aims had been substantially achieved. The summaries presented by the working groups showed that they had identified a large range of material that would be essential for the assessment work. Working Group 2 had not had sufficient coverage to use this approach in full but had illuminated very clearly the approach that will be needed to analyse pressures and impacts and relate them to other material;

(c) The output of the workshop would provide an invaluable guide to the data, showing what periods it covered and where it could be accessed;

(d) The material identified would thus be very helpful in developing the frameworks of the chapters within the approved outline and the issues identified in the outline within each chapter. Developing these frameworks would be an early task for the Group of Experts, in collaboration with the lead drafters for individual chapters or groups of chapters;

(e) Starting the dialogue between regional experts and the Group of Experts of the Regular Process was not enough in itself. It was necessary to find means to take that dialogue forward. The website of the Regular Process, when it was eventually started, would provide one such means. Other, less formal, ways might also be useful.

54. Subsequent discussion touched upon the following questions:

(a) *Should the North Atlantic, the North Sea, the Baltic Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea be treated as a single region?* The general opinion was that the enclosed and semi-enclosed seas to the east of the Atlantic all had specific features, which meant that they needed to be considered separately. It would be confusing to seek to apply general conclusions to them as a whole. Whether the North Atlantic could be treated as a single region depended very much on the approach to the exposition in the assessment of large ocean areas: either treating it as a single area or dividing it east and west were possible. It would be important, however, to keep in mind the need for simplification: the world ocean assessment needed to deliver a clear set of messages;

(b) *How might drafting teams best work together?* There was general agreement that the website of the Regular Process would be central to this work, and that the sooner this was available the better. The guidance for contributors should make clear the role of the lead member of the Group of Experts and the lead drafter in ensuring that all members of each drafting team were fully involved. There was wide support for enabling drafting teams to meet for face-to-face discussions;

(c) *How should the transfer of skills be managed?* There was general agreement that capacity-building was needed within the area covered by the workshop, as well as the region providing a source of knowledge for other regions. Transfers of skills within the region were needed both from north to south (particularly within the Mediterranean) and from west to east;

(d) *How could partnerships be developed?* There was general agreement that it was important to involve both the regional seas organizations and the regional

fisheries management bodies. Steps should be taken to keep them collectively informed of progress.

55. The Co-Chairs indicated that they would revise the draft in the light of those comments and any further comments that were received and, with the aid of the other members of the Group of Experts who were present, establish a final summary report.

Agenda item 26: means of communication and follow-up of the results of the workshop

56. Mr. Peter Harris gave a report on the work in hand to provide a website for the Regular Process. The website is aimed at State representatives as well as researchers and the general public. It was created as a dynamic, attractive and comprehensive portal for users of and contributors to the Regular Process. Currently, the resolution of some technical issues (where the website will be hosted and how the secretariat of the Regular Process can manage it) is awaited to launch it.

57. The participants in the workshop discussed possibilities for improving communications and networking within the North Atlantic, the Baltic Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea on reporting on, and assessment of, the marine environment. Participants stressed the need to make the Regular Process information widely available. A suggestion was made to use social networks to the extent possible. The website will serve as the number one tool for outreach and will need to be kept active and up to date.

58. The flyer for the recruitment of experts for the pool of experts was also showed. It will be important to recruit many quality experts for the pool. Ms. Rosenboom of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea clarified that States have to nominate those experts, via their Permanent Missions to the United Nations in New York, but that experts do not necessarily need to have the citizenship of the State that nominates them.

59. Closing remarks were made by Ms. Annebeth Rosenboom, on behalf of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, and by Ms. Sophie Mirgaux, on behalf of the host State.